

Kent F.A. 2, Berks and Bucks F.A. 1

THE ALLIED Counties hopes of topping their section in the Southern Counties Amateur Championship now rests between Kent and Surrey. Berks and Bucks missed the opportunity of moving through to the quarter-finals with an unimaginative display at Maidstone United's ground on Saturday.

For the 360 spectators it was rather similar to watching Maidstone's team in action as there were seven United players in the Kent squad.

Berks and Bucks earned the chance of winning their section outright. Now they must await the outcome of Kent's visit to Surrey which Kent must win, and certainly Kent will do their utmost to stay in the competition, which they last won in 1967.

On the whole the over fussy refereeing of Mr. M. J. Thorpe, who is on the Football League list as a linesman, spoilt what could have been an interesting contest.

Within 60 seconds of the start Berks and Bucks took the lead before anyone really had time to settle down in their seat.

Wokingham's Rod Harper waltzed into the area, following a forceful run, only to be blatantly tripped by Scott. Not one Kent player argued with the referee's decision and Tony Horseman left Trice hopelessly stranded from the spot.

The tempo was maintained at a fairly lively pace with Kent's main tactic of pumping long passes down the middle the dominating factor which gave Slough's John Delaney plenty to deal with.

There were, however, some alarming gaps in the Allied Counties defence mainly due to the lack of concentration from wing-halves Brian Pitts and Bobby Hatt.

Slough's Hatt looked strangely out of touch and could hardly put a pass right, while Pitts was being continuously caught too far upfield at crucial moments.

Following their early setback, Kent replied spiritedly setting up a wave of assaults

on the Allied Counties goal. Angel saw a fine volley rap the top of the bar while Wadyslaw forced Maskell to go full length and push aside his smart back-header.

It was just as well that Wycombe's 'keeper was in razor sharp form for he received precious little cover in front of him, as the energetic Kent forwards moved around with enthusiasm.

The Berks and Bucks attack failed to function as a unit with the Harper brothers playing to themselves. Also, the Wanderers' trio of Worley, Baker and Horseman displayed this tendency to retain possession.

MATCH DETAILS

Kent F.A.—M. Trice (Maidstone); **M. Ainsley** (Chatham); **B. Evans** (Maidstone); **T. McWhinnie** (Sheppey); **R. Scott**; **P. Long**; **G. Wadyslaw**; **G. Osborne**; **M. Angel** (Maidstone); **D. Crush** (Ashford); **D. Buxton** (Ramsgate).

Berks and Bucks F.A.—J. Maskell (Wycombe); **J. Ford** (Wokingham); **D. Smith** (Chesham); **B. Pitts** (Maidenhead); **J. Delaney**; **B. Hatt** (Slough); **L. Worley**; **B. Baker** (Wycombe); **R. Harper** (Wokingham); **A. Horseman** (Wycombe); **E. Harper** (Wokingham).

Corners—Kent 12, Berks and Bucks 8.

Free-kicks (conceded) Kent 10, Berks and Bucks 12.

Referee: Mr. M. J. Thorpe (East Peckham).

Attendance: 350.

An astonishing decision by referee Mr. Thorpe put Kent on level terms in the 38th minute. Osborne flighted a free-kick towards the far post and Maskell, surrounded by three defensive colleagues, quite clearly moved two paces off his line to pluck out the danger. However, Mr. Thorpe halted play and awarded Kent a penalty, indicating hands by one of the defenders.

The Berks and Bucks players' protests were turned down and Evans accepted this golden chance of putting his team back into the match, sending Maskell the wrong way.

Soon after the re-start Hatt contributed his one main asset to the afternoon's proceedings when he moved up to meet a Baker cross and headed inches wide of the right hand post.

Worley carved out a good opening for Horseman by selling one defender the dummy and slipping a pass inside. Horseman moved past another defender but Trice managed to hold his shot at full stretch.

At the other end Maskell committed his one blemish of the afternoon and so nearly paid a heavy price for his mistake. McWhinnie tried a swerving cross from 25 yards out and the 'keeper was caught hopelessly out of position as the ball struck the cross-bar.

However, no fault can be attached to Maskell for Kent's winner which came 18 minutes from time. Angel's low cross whipped into the Berks' and Bucks' area with Hatt positioned to clear.

But, he completely missed the ball and Crush gave Maskell no hope from four yards, although the 'keeper managed to get a hand to the shot but could not divert it from its path.